REJOICE IN THE LORD, NOT ANYWHERE ELSE!

PART I – **Philippians 3:1-7**
4-2-2025

REJOICE IN THE LORD, NOT ANYWHERE ELSE!

How can I maintain a joyful attitude that is centered in Christ?

I. DON'T LISTEN TO FALSE TEACHERS (V. 2)

A. AVOID THOSE WHO SEEK TO GET FROM YOU (hungry prowlers)

B. AVOID THOSE WHO SEEK TO STUMBLE YOU (evil workers)

C. AVOID THOSE WHO SEEK TO IMPRESS YOU (flesh cutters)

II. DON'T LEAN ON THE FLESH (V. 3-7)
(trust the true source of power)

A. OUR WORSHIP IS SPIRITUAL

B. OUR PRAISE GOES TO CHRIST

C. OUR CONFIDENCE IS NOT IN THE FLESH

1. It's not in racial (family) heritage (v. 5a)
2. It's not in personal discipline (v. 5b)
3. It's not in religious zeal (v. 6a)
4. It's not in legalistic morality (v. 6b)

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Our Confidence is in Christ alone! We rejoice in Him!

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INTRO: Ex. of all the joy in the Christian life at salvation (because you are dwelling on what Christ did for you)

But this rejoicing may tend to fade. Why? Because you have stopped thinking about what Christ did. Like an old toy, your salv. becomes neglected. You start rejoicing in other things--even good things.

It is easy to get wrapped up in "things," not only the tangible things that we can see, but also intangibles such as reputation, fame, achievement, etc. (cp. "Things"- 3:7, 13)

V. 1 **"the same things"** - Refers to the concept of "rejoicing in the Lord" which occurs throughout the Epistle (1:4,18,25; 2:17,18,28; 4:4,10)

"not grievous, but ... safe" - For Paul to again remind the Philippians to keep their full confidence and resultant rejoicing in the Lord Jesus Christ was nothing troublesome or out of reluctance, but for them it gives a sure footing; a firmness; a stability.
Safe - Lit. Untripable; not overthrown; not stumbled)

"In the Lord" - Rejoice for two reasons:
1) because you <u>belong</u> to the Lord
2) because of what the Lord has <u>done for you</u>

"Rejoice in the <u>Lord"</u> - Paul's life was build around <u>one person</u> - Christ! (1:21)

The person of Jesus Christ was Paul's answer to every heartache and hardship.

To make the Lord Jesus the <u>center</u> of everything in one's life is the only way to be happy (Blair, p. 72).

Much of our problems (etc.), anxieties are caused because we look **<u>in</u>** and not **<u>up</u>**!

- **REJOICE IN THE LORD, NOT ANYWHERE ELSE!**

How can I maintain a joyful attitude that is centered <u>in Christ?</u>

BY HEEDING TWO SAFEGUARDS IN VERSES 2 - 7
(2 negative admonitions)

I. DON'T LISTEN TO FALSE TEACHERS (V. 2)

Paul is describing Judaizers who tried to mix law and grace.

[Give background of Gospel going to Gentiles (Acts 10), then controversy (Acts 15), then the Jews who followed Paul everywhere he went trying to steal his converts and churches]

Judaizers - were people who insisted that you could only enter the Kingdom through the gates of Judaism.

Paul now uses 3 descriptive titles (characterizations), but refers to the same group of people, not three distinct groups.

A. AVOID THOSE WHO SEEK TO GET FROM YOU (hungry prowlers)

"Dogs" - were very despised, miserable creatures because they prowled around eastern cities, without a home and without an owner, feeding on the refuge and filth of the streets, quarreling among themselves and attacking those who passed by.

Paul uses the term here to describe those who prowl around the Christian congregations, seeking to win converts.

The Judaizers, like dogs, snapped at Paul's heels and followed him from place to place, "barking" their false doctrines.

B. AVOID THOSE WHO SEEK TO STUMBLE YOU (evil workers)

"evil workers" - The reason their work was evil was because they are performed by the flesh and not the Spirit.

They are so deceptive because they "work" yet their motives and end result of their work was evil. - Compare: II Cor. 11:12-15

The result of such workers would be the "stumbling" of God's people, not their edification.

Their motive was to stumble, not to build up.

"Stumble" - Appli. The most dangerous false teachers are not those who outright teach 100% heresy. The most dangerous are those who mix truth (Christianity) with error. (ex. Mormons, J.W.'s, R.C.C., Charismatics)

C. AVOID THOSE WHO SEEK TO <u>IMPRESS</u> YOU (flesh cutters)

"concision" - Here, for emphasis, Paul uses a sarcastic pun on the word "circumcision"

The change on the prepositional prefix on this word is an intentional contemptuous remark having the idea of fleshly mutilization; Paul in effect calls them "butchers" who make a big deal about demanding fleshly circumcision for salvation. They were "cutting themselves up for no good purpose."

Appli: Don't think you are spiritual just because you don't do things that others do, or do things that others do not <u>if</u> such omissions or practices are not commanded <u>in Scripture</u>. Or else you are a legalist.

False teachers (whether doctrinally or morally evil) will try to get you to look at men. There are those who in the name of Christianity will promote the flesh (ex. the power of positive thinking). They will draw your attention to themselves (cp. v. 18 - 19).

II. DON'T LEAN ON THE FLESH (V. 3-7)

(Trust the true source of power)

Three key participles set the stage for Paul's point:

A. OUR WORSHIP IS SPIRITUAL

Paul by saying "we are the circumcision" is saying we are the true Christians whose circumcision (mark of distinction) is inward . . . "of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Ro. 2:29).

"Worship" = service. it refers to a worshipping by ministering.

"In Spirit" = by the power of the Spirit; not by the flesh. (See Jn. 4:19-24)

B. OUR PRAISE GOES TO CHRIST

"rejoice" - to boast; to glory.

"In Christ" - our rejoicing is not in ourselves (good works) but is only in Christ!

If it wasn't for Christ we would have no: salvation, forgiveness, peace with God, home in Heaven, resurrection, no purpose in life, etc.

C. OUR CONFIDENCE IS NOT IN THE FLESH

"have no confidence" - We have no persuasion or trust in the flesh. The perfect tense of this participle points to the fact that Paul not only turned from trusting the flesh in the past, but that he still in the present puts no confidence in it.

"Flesh" - man's natural abilities and qualities (his own works, etc., that do not please God for salvation).

The flesh profits nothing (Jn. 6:63), and it has nothing good in it (Ro. 7:18).

Good works for salvation are like filthy rags (Is. 64:6). There is only one "good work" that takes a sinner to heaven: the finished work of Christ (Jn. 19:30; Heb. 10:11-14).

"Flesh" - when we think of the flesh, we often think of the lower forms of sensual gratification (ex. lust of flesh, lust of eyes). But this verse is describing the works of the flesh in its highest, noblest form (in man's opinion; yet without the power of God).

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" (Ro. 7:18).

There is not one good thing in any of us! There is nothing in us God wants or can use! That is difficult to accept. We try to convince ourselves that there must be (if we dig deep enough) just a little something that is valuable in the old nature.

Illus. of work done in the flesh:
--No prayer for power - we think we have the strength
--No prayer for guidance - we think we have the wisdom. We make our own plans

(We are independent; we hold on to that which the world looks at as being successful)

Ex. Do you ever have days when it just seems like you are spinning your wheels?

Paul shows that he knows what he is talking about, he is speaking from experience.

**** Paul shows that he knows what he is talking about, he is speaking from experience. Paul's shift in confidence should be ours as well!***

a. ***Our confidence is not in*** **external rites or ordinances (v.5a)**

Paul entered into a National covenant relationship at circumcision; However, the new covenant required no such physical circumcision.

b. ***Our confidence is not in*** **racial (family) heritage (v. 5b)**

"Israel" - he was not a proselyte, nor a descendent of Ishmael (`Abraham's other son) or Esau (Isaac's other son)

"Benjamin" - Benjamin and Joseph were Jacob's favorite sons. Born to Rachel, Jacob's favorite wife. Israel's first king came from Benjamin.

Mt. 3:9 - "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

Many take pride in their national origin (ex. Germans; Italians)

Acts 17:26 says: "God hath made of <u>one blood</u> all nations."

c. ***Our confidence is not in*** **Pharisaical religious dedication (v. 5c)**

"Pharisee" - If anyone was viewed as being spiritual, it was a Pharisee.
He held to "orthodox" doctrine (Acts 23:6-9), and carried out the letter of the Law to the minutest detail (Lk. 18:10-14).

Uncleanness repulsed the Pharisees. They wrote, "He who lightly esteems washing his hands will perish from the earth." (illus. Bud Nomland who when in Israel washed his face, drank, etc., from the water that is used <u>only</u> for ceremonial washing before praying at the Western Wall)

Jesus warned, *"Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the . . . Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven"* (Mt. 5:20)

d. ***Our confidence is not in*** **religious zeal (v. 6a)**

"Zeal, persecuting" - The Apostle formerly "hunted down" Christians with great enthusiasm and motivation. Paul (formerly Saul) not only stood <u>for</u> his beliefs, but he was so zealous for them, he also stood <u>against</u> what he viewed as the heretical, soul-damning lies of the Christians.

Rom. 10:1-2 - *"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a* ***<u>zeal</u>*** *of God, but <u>not according to knowledge</u>.*

e. ***Our confidence is not in*** **legalistic self-righteousness (v. 6b)**

"Blameless" - as <u>men</u> viewed Saul, he was blameless (that is, no one could point their finger at him and have accusation that He was not a "good Jew.") In man's eyes he perfectly kept the law right down to the <u>letter</u>. (NOTE: it was external conformity - he like all lost men did not understand the true purpose of the Law) (He did not see his sinful heart)

How could a sincere man like Saul of Tarsus be so wrong? He was using the wrong yardstick. (He measured himself with other men; but one day he saw himself compared with Jesus Christ)).

"Gain <u>to me</u>" - Paul was before salvation selfishly proud of his Jewish heritage, his religious achievements, and his reputation as a scholar (Acts 26:24). These were his treasures that brought glory only to him - not to God.

"Counted" - Paul made a mental decision and calculated that his own fleshly means of righteousness actually made him spiritually bankrupt.

"I counted" = perfect tense in Greek, meaning: I did count them loss in the past and I still do today.

Illus. the tendency to go back to and take pride in the old things you once turned your back on.

He then "chalked up" his gains as loss so that he could have Christ. In order for someone to get saved, they must first give up their soteriological confidence in their religion, achievements, etc.

"Loss" - the things Paul took pride in (before salvation) were actually a hindrance to his coming to Christ for salvation. It was not bad things that kept Paul away from Jesus--it was good things! He had to lose his "religion" to find salvation.

Ex. of "good" hindrances that keep unbelievers from Christ.
Ex. of "good" hindrances that keep believers from living in the Spirit.

Your prayer needs to be: God, I surrender all to you that makes me proud: my heritage, my discipline, my education, my morality, my zeal. I now give it all up in exchange for Jesus Christ!

CONCLU: Ex. Some believers act as though God should be thankful that we are Christians. We consider ourselves as assets to Him because of all the talents and abilities we have to offer.

**Only to the extent to which you are yielded to Christ can He use you.

God places no higher value on saved flesh than unsaved.

Illus. Hymn - "All is vain unless the Spirit of the Holy One comes down"

A sense of happiness can come when you do something good (even if it is in the flesh) Why? Because you are rejoicing in that thing --that accomplishment, etc. But no in Christ!

Don't rejoice in yourselves, for we have nothing in the flesh in which to rejoice.
Don't rejoice in friends, for they may prove untrue.
Don't rejoice in circumstances, they may change.
Don't rejoice in your religious achievements they are filthy rags without a living relationship with Christ!

Rejoice in the Lord!